Request for Expressions of Interest (EOI)

External Review Group for WHO Guideline on Contact Tracing

The World Health Organization (WHO) is seeking experts to serve as reviewers on the External Review Group (ERG) for a WHO Guideline on Contact Tracing.

The guidance below provides information about rationale for this guideline, the advisory group in question, the expert profiles being sought, the process to express interest, and the process of selection; and should be followed with submission no later than Monday 11 March 2024 23:59 Geneva time (CET). EOI should be sent by email to the Contact Tracing Guideline team (contacttracing@who.int) using the subject line “Expression of interest for ERG on Contact Tracing.”

Background

Historically, contact tracing has suffered from a lack of a real “home” in public health. It relies on the work of professionals and citizens from diverse backgrounds, including public health and laboratory staff, digital experts, anthropologists, ethicists, risk communication and community engagement specialists, community leaders and community health workers. With its components dissipated across disciplines, it rarely receives sufficient attention and resources in outbreak preparedness activities, yet it remains a critical component of public health response.

Furthermore, the absence of and clear need for clarity on optimal contact tracing strategies, guidelines and standard operating procedures has been stressed at many forums, including during the June 2020 consultation organised by the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN).1

To address this need, WHO is in the process of developing a disease-agnostic WHO Guideline on Contact Tracing. The envisaged product will be the first global policy resource from WHO with an explicit focus on evidence-based methodology of contact tracing, with specific considerations for how it should be adapted in certain settings and epidemiological scenarios.

The target audience for this guideline are local, national and international public health stakeholders including communities, civil society, ministries of health, national public health institutes, NGOs, UN agencies, three levels of WHO.

Functions of the ERG

The ERG shall have the following functions, as described in the WHO Handbook for Guideline Development:

• Conduct an external peer review the guideline on its whole
• Review the guideline for writing style (attractive, lively) and clarity
• Comment on user-friendliness
• Identify any errors or missing data
• Comment on clarity, setting-specific issues, and implications for implementation

The ERG shall not:

• Change the recommendations formulated by the Guideline Development Group (GDG). If ERG members have major concerns regarding one or more recommendations, the GDG should meet to discuss and address them.

**Operations of the ERG on Contact Tracing**

1. The ERG is expected to review the final draft of the guideline in May 2024 over a period of two weeks.
2. Information and documentation to which members may gain access in performing ERG-related activities shall be considered as confidential and proprietary to WHO. ERG members will not purport to speak on behalf of, or represent WHO to any third party. All proposed members will be required to sign an appropriate confidentiality undertaking and provisions on ownership.
3. WHO retains full control over the publication of the guideline, including deciding whether or not to publish them.
4. Appointments to and participation in this WHO ERG are not remunerated
5. The guideline will be drafted in English.

**Who can express interest?**

The ERG will be multidisciplinary, with members who have a range of technical knowledge, skills and experience. Approximately 10-15 may be selected. WHO welcomes expressions of interest from (but not limited to) individuals with the following attributes:

1. Relevant technical experts with professional experience and scientific excellence (evidenced by publications in peer-reviewed journals) in areas, such as:
   - infectious disease
   - social and behavioral science
   - health workforce
   - public health policy
   - health financing
   - operational research
   - community engagement
   - scientific communication
2. End-users who will adopt, adapt and implement the guideline, including local, national and international public health stakeholders, such as:
   - Communities, and civil society;
   - Ministries of health, and national public health institutes, and inter-governmental organizations;
- Non-governmental organizations;
- United Nations agencies; and
- WHO

3. Other technical experts, such as:
   - Experts on ethics, equity, human rights and gender in public health
   - Health economists
   - Field epidemiologists
   - Experts on processes and methods for developing evidence-based guidelines

All ERG members will serve in their individual expert capacity and shall not represent any governments, any commercial industries or entities, any research, academic or civil society organizations, or any other bodies, entities, institutions, or organizations. No honoraria will be provided to any ERG members for their services or otherwise. They are expected to fully comply with the Code of Conduct for WHO Experts.

As per WHO handbook for guideline development, representatives of commercial organizations cannot serve as members of an ERG.

Submitting your expression of interest

To be considered for the ERG on contact tracing, please submit the following no later than Monday 11 March 2024 23:59 Geneva time (CET). EOI should be sent by email to the Contact Tracing Guideline team (contacttracing@who.int) using the subject line “Expression of interest for ERG on Contact Tracing.” EOI should include:

- A cover letter, indicating your motivation to apply and how you satisfy the selection criteria. Please note that, if selected, membership will be in a personal capacity. Therefore, do not use the letterhead or other identification of your employer.
- Your curriculum vitae;
- A signed and completed Declaration of Interests (DOI) form for WHO Experts, available at https://www.who.int/about/ethics/declarations-of-interest; and
- A signed and completed Confidentiality Undertaking form

Selection processes

Each application will be reviewed by the Responsible Technical Officer and members of the Steering Group and the selection process will be shared with the GDG. DOI forms of individual experts will be reviewed. Any potential or perceived conflicts of interest based on the declared information in the DOI form will be considered in the selection process.

The selection of members of the ERG will be based on the following criteria: technical expertise, experience in international and country policy work, and ability to work constructively with people from different cultural backgrounds and orientations. The selection of ERG members will also take account of the need for diverse perspectives from different regions, and for gender diversity.
At any point during the selection process, telephone interviews may be scheduled between an applicant and the WHO Secretariat to enable WHO to ask questions relating to the applicant’s experience and expertise and/or to assess whether the applicant meets the criteria for membership in the relevant ERG.

WHO reserves the right to accept or reject any expression of interest, to annul the open call process and reject all expressions of interest at any time without incurring any liability to the affected applicant or applicants and without any obligation to inform the affected applicant or applicants of the grounds for WHO’s action. WHO may also decide, at any time, not to proceed with the establishment of the ERG, disband an existing ERG or modify the work of the ERG. WHO shall not in any way be obliged to reveal, or discuss with any applicant, how an expression of interest was assessed, or to provide any other information relating to the evaluation/selection process or to state the reasons for not choosing a member.

Due to an expected high volume of interest, only selected individuals will be informed.

ERG members will not be remunerated for their services in relation to the ERG or otherwise.

If you have any questions, please write to contacttracing@who.int well before the applicable deadline.